The Magic of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:
In Search of the Genie's Lamp in Multicultural Education

By Nawang Phuntsog

A rising tide of studies with statistical descriptions has inundated the multicultural literature in the past two decades. One wave of study strongly calls for the restructuring of teacher preparation programs to address the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity of public school student populations (Hodgkinson, 1996; National Center for Education Statistics, 1994). Several other studies point out the disparity between a homogenous teaching population and increasing heterogeneity of racial,

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ethnic, cultural, and social class of school student populations (Bennett, 1995; Gomez ,1996). A burgeoning number of studies also indicate the discrepancy in drop-out and academic failure rates between students from the dominant and the dominated cultures (Clark,1989; Jacob & Jordan, 1987; Yates, 1987). Another group of studies highlight the fact that cultural mismatch between teachers and ethnically diverse students contributes to the differences in school success (Au & Mason, 1981; Erickson, 1987; Ogbu, 1987). Yet, according to John U. Ogbu (1987), the cultural mismatch factor most negatively

impacts the academic performance of African-American and Hispanic students who are the largest minority groups in public schools. All these studies invariably call for restructuring of teacher preparation programs so that prospective teachers have skills, attitudes, and knowledge to meet the challenges of culturally diverse school environments.

Studies based on the cultural differences concept make the assumption that academic achievement of students from culturally diverse backgrounds will improve if schools and teachers make an attempt to ensure that classroom instruction is conducted in a manner responsive to the student's home culture. Modification of classroom instruction to respond positively to home culture of students is known in research literature as culturally compatible (Jordan , 1987), culturally congruent (Au & Kawakami, 1994), culturally responsive (Erickson, 1987), and culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1990). The publications of Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework (1991, 2nd edition) and Teaching Diverse Population: Formulating a Knowledge Base (1994) have contributed to the importance of culturally responsive teaching as a critical aspect of enhancing the learning of all students. Writings in these books reverberate with cacophonous calls to recognize the centrality of social and cultural factors in school learning, and the urgent need for schools to develop culturally responsive content and process to ensure equity and excellence for all students.

The dramatic shift in the demographic landscape of the United States is more pronounced in public schools than anywhere else. For example, according to Brenda L. Martin (1997), Oak View School in Huntington Beach, California, with a total student population of 609, included one Asian, one Pacific Islander, one Filipino, 529 Hispanic, one Black, and 14 whites in its 1995 racial and ethnic survey. The cultural and racial diversity of student population, in and by istelf, is not the problem; but the way educators and community members respond to it positively or negatively will impact the self-esteem and academic success of students from varied cultural backgrounds. The startling changes in student population has, therefore, challenged schools and educators to find creative ways to work with culturally diverse students to ensure educational quality and equity for all.

Teacher preparation programs have responded to cultural differences studies and demographic imperatives in a variety of ways. For example, inclusion of multicultural education courses and provision of certain direct cross-cultural student teaching experiences are intended to help develop prospective teachers with skills, attitudes, and knowledge to function effectively in schools. Yet, the current conceptualization and implementation of mutlicultural teacher education is predicated on questionable assumptions and premises. For example, multicultural education as a separate course is assumed to be sufficient to address a plethora of diversity issues. This may include anything from the ethnic identity of a student in a rural remote town in Montana to that of transforming curriculum for social justice and for challenging cultural hegemony. Though teacher diversity programs may, at

their best, barely scratch one's deeply rooted cultural beliefs, students are expected to undergo profound personal transformation that may then enable them to question and challenge their long-held views about school teaching and learning. The current conceptualization of teacher preparation for cultural diversity seems to exist on an optimistic plane that assumes that a single dose of multicultural education is effective to prepare the teaching force to narrow the academic achievement and drop-out gaps between students from dominant and dominated cultures.

Today's foremost challenge in education is to create learning environments that maintain the cultural integrity of every child while enhancing their educational success (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Being closest to learners, classroom teachers are in a critical position to provide learning experiences that will ensure cultural integrity and academic success for all children. At the classroom level, culturally responsive teaching essentially involves using students' cultural experiences and background as a medium for helping them learn important academic skills of reading, writing, and computing. For example, different versions of Cinderella fairy tales found in such cultural traditions as Vietnam, the Philippines, Africa, and the Middle East can be used in a variety of classroom activities to study the differences and similarities of characters, themes, values, and perspectives. Children can then write their own Cinderella story as a culminating experience. Inclusion of children's literature from different cultural traditions provides learning opportunities for many children to affirm their cultural experiences and help enrich the learning of all children. More importantly, this type of activity can help children reduce and challenge prejudical and stereotypical attitudes they may bring into classrooms.

Teachers can not be expected to perform miracles. Undoubtedly, the public schools' ability to meet this challenge for all students depends on the way teachers are prepared with skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to enhance their ability to undertake the gigantic responsibility of creating classroom environments appropriate for achieving excellence and equality of learning for all children. Renewal of the teacher education curriculum is indeed a powerful way to ensure that teachers are prepared effectively to respond positively to culturally diverse students.

A constructive approach in this direction is then to identify crucial issues that educators think are important for preparing teachers for cultural diversity. The interactive and context-driven nature of teaching requires educators to take into account the students' social-cultural environments in which their schooling occurs. There is then a crucial need to prepare teachers with cultural knowledge and competencies to adapt curriculum and instruction for culturally responsive classroom practices as a way to enhance the learning of all students in culturally diverse schools. The purpose of this article is, therefore, (a) to identify critical issues in preparing teachers for cultural diversity, (b) to profile what educators consider to be the crucial aspects of a culturally responsive pedagogy, and finally (c) to propose a holistic framework for integrating personal culture, microculture, and macroculture

into culturally responsive teaching practice. The inclusion of different levels of culture is intended to show their relationships with the five important aspects of culturally responsive teaching practices.

Approach of the Study

The primary purpose of this inquiry is to bring a sharp focus on what educators perceive to be the critical aspects of "Culturally Responsive Teaching." Using culturally responsive teaching as descriptors, the researcher was able to locate from the ERIC database 13 documents published during the years 1992 to 1997. These documents consist of : two reports, three conference papers, five journal articles, two general papers, and one book, as listed following:

Reports:
        Novick, R., 1996
        Novick, R., 1996a
Conference Papers:
        Gormley, K., McDermontt, P., Rothenberg, J. & Hammer, J., 1995
        Glomb, N., 1996
        Hemmings, A.,1994
Journal Articles:
        McIntire, R., 1995
        Hudson, L.M., Bergin, D.A., & Chryst, C.F., 1993
        Wlodkowski, R.J. & Ginsberg, M.B., 1995
        Chepyator-Thompson, R.J., 1994
        Jackson, F.R., 1994
General Papers:
        Martin, B., 1997
        Sandhu, D.S., 1994
Book:
        Wlodkowski, R.J. & Ginsberg, M.B., 1994

In their book, Diversity and Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching, Raymond J. Wlodkowski and Margery B. Ginsberg (1994) propose a framework intended to assist public school educators in thinking about culturally responsive pedagogy. Four motivational conditions constitute their conception of a culturally responsive teaching framework. What follows is a brief description of this framework:

1. Establishing inclusion refers to those norms, procedures, and structures that are carefully blended together to promote a learning environment in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another.

2. Developing attitude relates to those norms, procedures, and structures that create, through relevance and choice, a favorable disposition among learners and teachers toward the learning experience.

3. Enchancing meaning refers to those norms, procedures, and structures that expand, refine, or increase the complexity of what is learned in a way that matters to learners, includes their values and purposes, and contributes to a critical consciousness.

4. Engendering competence refers to those norms, procedures, and structures that create an understanding that learners are effective in learning something of personal value. (p.20)

This framework was used in this inquiry to identify issues, norms, procedures, and structures considered crucial for culturally responsive teaching.

Issues and Problems of Culturally Responsive Teaching

The continuing upsurge of interest among researchers and educators in developing educational strategies designed to bolster academic achievement of culturally and linguistically subordinated student populations is beyond any doubt. For example, the California State Department of Education has published a series of handbooks intended to help teachers identify effective ways to work with children of specific languages and ethnicity. Handbooks , in and by themselves, are not necessarily a cure-all educational tonic. Worse still, teachers may reduce the solution of under achievement of minority students to merely finding the "right" teaching methods, strategies, or prepackaged curricula purported to work with students who have historically not benefited from regular mainstreamed instruction (Bartolome, 1994). Another closely related concern is that such strategies or approaches that work well with one language and ethnic minority students may be perceived to be effective with another group (Vogt, Jordan, & Tharp, 1987). This "one size fits all" mentality runs the great risk of stereotyping subordinated students and engenders instructional recipes that quickly reduce the complexity of dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity to a technical method issue.

Avoiding the pitfalls of what Lilia I. Bartolome (1994) calls "methods fetish" is Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's (1995) conception of culturally responsive teaching "that crosses disciplines and cultures to engage all learners." Wlodkowski and Ginsberg's comprehensive definition of culturally responsive teaching "accommodates the dynamic mix of race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, religion, and family that contributes to every student's cultural identity" (p.17). A growing number of researchers have brought to the forefront the central role of culture in school learning. Similarly they have asserted in unequivocal terms that one can no longer ignore its powerful influence on student learning under the pretext of maintaining high academic standards or treating everyone alike in a color-blind approach. On the other hand it is important to emphasize that we are all victims of cultural ethnocentrism that seriously impedes one's ability to view values, norms, and behavior from different cultures as viable ways of perceiving reality. Hence cultural ethnocentric outlooks of teachers may blind them to their own negative assump-

tions or stereotypes that they may hold toward different cultural groups. It is crucial to provide teachers with powerful learning experiences designed to bring about profound personal transformation needed to began the process of becoming culturally responsive teachers.

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) propose an intrinsic motivational framework for teachers that recognizes the importance of linking content to the cultural backgrounds of students as a way to enhance student involvement while maintaining their cultural integrity. An effective culturally responsive teaching should be characterized by the following: respect for diversity; engage motivation of all learners; create a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment; derive teaching practices from principles that cross disciplines and cultures; and promote justice and equity in society (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Tonya Huber (1991) asserts that "culturally responsible content and approaches recognize the influences of culture, language, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, exceptionality, socioeconomic level, and home environment" (p.4) as a way to reduce cultural discontinuity between students' ethnic heritage and school culture. Huber (1991) further believes that in a culturally responsive environment teachers are "not content to teach about ethnic groups—they are responsive to the cultural identity of the learner, as well" (p.3). An extensive literature review led Martin (1997) to concur with other researchers that culturally responsive teaching acknowledges and acts upon the research that has found "that changing the structure of the classroom interactions and activities, so that they are more compatible with the home cultures of the children, promotes classroom learning" (p.15) . It would be misleading if one considers that merely tinkering with classroom structure will ensure academic success for language minority students. The societal context is vitally linked to the process of achieving empowerment for ethnic minority students.

Moving from an assimilationist "melting pot" perspective to a culturally pluralist perspective demands that schools make profound changes in the way teachers views culture, learning, language, and teaching. A key part of cultural pluralism is the assumption that diverse languages, cultures, and perspectives are an asset, not a liability. However, Rebecca Novick (1996) makes the observation that "the factory model school, with the goal of using educational technology to stamp a uniform education on all students is deeply entrenched in American educational thinking " (p.61). Reiterating the culturally and politically constructed nature of schools, David Tyack and William Tobin (1994), as cited by Novick (1996), view schools as the "historical product of particular groups with particular interest and values at a particular time" (p.478).

Cultural transmissionist and transformist perspectives on the schools' function are inseparable from larger political, cultural, educational, and social argument of melting pot and salad bowl ideology. Todd Gitlin (1995), as cited by Novick (1996), states poignantly the assimilationist perspective when he writes that "The mission

of cultural institutions is to pass the heritage on, not trade it away for a mess of multicultural pottage" (p.486). At the other end of the spectrum is the pluralist ideology captured in the words of poet Octavio Paz (cited by Novick, 1996):

> What sets the world in motion is the interplay of differences, their attraction and repulsion. Life is plurality, death is uniformity. By suppressing differences and peculiarities, by eliminating different civilizations and cultures, progress weakens life and favors death. The ideal of a single civilization for everyone, implicit in the cult of progress and technique, improvishes and mutilates us. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, diminishes a possibility of life. (1976)

Like a garden adorned with many colorful flowers of all shapes and sizes, human experience is greatly enriched and expanded in a multicultural society when schools become "respectful places—more than just mere civility" for all children (Scherer, 1997). An authentic multicultural education must include an on-going renewal of school curriculum as a powerful and constructive approach to affirm and reflect the cultural diversity of the nation.

Jim Cummins' (1986) theoretical framework is useful for analyzing the invariability of minority students' academic failure and their school success. Drawing from patterns of minority school failure from an international perspective, Cummins (1986) begins his framework with the recognition that "power and status relations between minority and majority groups exert a major influence on school performance" (p.21). An important assertion of his thesis is that minority groups' "insecurity and ambivalence about the value of their own cultural identity as result of their interactions with the dominant group" (p.23) contribute to their academic difficulties in schools. The ability of teachers to alter this relationship will greatly be enhanced if teachers and educators examine their personal beliefs and values to seek redefinition of the ways they interact with ethnic children and communities. It may be safe to assume that Cummins' (1986) framework has given impetus for many subsequent research studies assessing and analyzing teachers' ability to function effectively with diverse students.

Teacher preparation programs have been criticized for their inability to prepare teachers effectively to address varied needs of culturally heterogeneous student population. In his foreword to Teaching Diverse Populations: Formulating a Knowledge Base, McPhail (1994) highlights the urgency of this issue when he writes:

> The knowledge base for teacher preparation should be solidly founded on what is known about teaching diverse populations. Cultural diversity is not a problem nor should it be an appendage to teacher preparation programs, but rather, should be the yarn from which such programs are developed. Formulating a knowledge base requires a synthesis of existing knowledge about teaching in diverse populations. (p. vii)

Novick (1996) conjectured that "at the heart of argument about the means and ends

of schooling is the question: What kind of society do we want?" (p.62). Teacher education program can best serve these goals by careful attention to its entire structure and process of teacher preparation as a way to gauge their effectiveness in educating teachers for diversity.

Current Literature about Culturally Responsive Practices

Culturally responsive teachers recognize the fact that those students who do not feel valued in school settings are likely to develop lower self-esteem, alienating them further from school learning. Validating cultural experiences of minorities in schooling process and content is viewed as a way to affirm minority students' identity. It can also serve to make multiple ways of seeing and perceiving a viable experience of all in this culturally diverse society. Culturally responsive teaching and content then "recognizes the influence of culture, language, race, gender, or other characteristics" (p.5) that mark children as different from the majority (Huber, 1991). How do teachers create a caring, safe, and secure learning environment that ensures that cultural and linguistic diversity are the foundations of their pedagogy?

Several culturally responsive practices and strategies have been identified in the research literature reviewed for this inquiry. In their framework, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) conceptualize culturally responsive teaching in terms of four motivational conditions that include: (1) establishing inclusion; (2) enhancing positive attitude; (3) enhancing meaning; and (4) engendering competence. Two criteria guide the process of ensuring relevance and significance of each condition in the framework. Additionally, the framework identifies norms, procedures, and structures that are intended to help teachers and educators develop and implement culturally responsive learning environments.

Although Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) acknowledge "a humble sense of self-scrutiny" of teachers to be an essential aspect of " creating learning experiences that allow the integrity of every learner to be sustained," the framework does not clearly provide norms, procedures, or structure for self-introspection. However, the criteria of relevance and choice, along with development of norms, procedures, and structure, is intended to help students develop positive attitudes. For example, making choices in content and assessment methods based on students' experiences, values, needs, and strengths is expected to engender students' positive attitudes. In this structure the lack of provision for self introspection of teachers is the most serious drawback, as teacher bias and prejudice may go unchallenged.

Francesina R. Jackson (1994) suggests a seven-step strategy to build culturally responsive teaching. William G. Sparks (1994) has modified and used these strategies successfully in teaching physical education. Jackson's seven steps include: (1) building trust; (2) becoming culturally literate; (3) building different methodological approaches; (4) using effective questioning techniques; (5) providing effective feedback; (6) analyzing instructional materials; and (7) establishing

positive home-school relations. Sparks (1994) believes that these seven strategies are effective ways to prepare teachers "to meet the needs of children from diverse cultural and social groups" (p.61). In addition, she observed that for these strategies to work "schools must embrace the principles of multicultural education to respond to a society that is changing" (p.61).

After an extensive literature review, Novick (1996) summarized a number of commitments and competencies that she considered to be crucial for improving student learning: (1) high expectations for all students; (2) a commitment to learn from and about children; (3) building on the strengths and experiences children bring to school; (4) giving wider choices and more power to teachers; and (5) developing schools as a caring community. She feels that the first step in culturally responsive teaching is to engage in self-reflective analysis of one's attitudes and beliefs about teaching culturally different children (Novick, 1996).

Daya S. Sandhu (1994) proposed a three-step model for developing skills and attitudes crucial for culturally responsive teaching. The three steps of awareness, acceptance, and action suggest a number of teacher initiated behaviors to manage diversity and encourage interactions that are enhanced by difference (p. 16). The awareness step includes an important dimension that requires teachers to examine their own beliefs, values, and behaviors that may hinder or facilitate the process of student learning. The key role and responsibility of teachers in mediating cultures in their classrooms is greatly emphasized in this approach.

Working with preservice teachers, Lynne M. Hudson, David A. Bergin, and Carolyn F. Chryst (1993) developed a framework with four key components intended to enhance culturally relevant experiences for their preservice teachers. Their four key aspects are: (1) building the cultural knowledge base; (2) a reciprocal sociocultural model; (3) practicing models of culturally responsive teaching; and (4) cross-cultural field experiences supervised by mentors. They concluded that these experiences "empowered the teachers to transform their practices" to become culturally responsive teachers. This was the only culturally responsive practice that has emerged from the experiences of teacher educators working closely with preservice teachers. It may, therefore, be the most relevant approach for preparing teachers for cultural diversity.

In an ethnographic study of teacher behaviors, Annette Hemmings (1994) observed that culturally responsive teachers: (1) showed sensitivity to students' life experiences; (2) aligned curriculum with home cultures of students; and (3) organized learning activities in conjunction with student's social interactional styles. According to Hemmings, culturally responsive teachers not only made genuine attempts to know their students but also kept open communication channels with them. Further, Hemmings observed that such teachers "listened to students, and took careful note of their lifestyles, social identities, and especially their expectations for teachers" (p.21).

In another recent study involving 40 student teachers and 26 cooperating

teachers , Kathleen Gormley, Peter McDermontt, Julia Rothenberg, and John Hammer (1995) found that neither student teachers nor their cooperating teachers thought or reflected on the interaction between culture and teaching. The survey data analysis of the study indicated that cooperating teachers were generally more ethnocentric than student teachers while responding to issues of bilingual education and cultural diversity. They emphasized that "teachers in this multicultural society must learn to teach and construct learning activities through children's cultures—doing otherwise will be tragic for children, families, and our communities" (p.25).

Building a cultural knowledge base and engaging in self-reflective activity are considered crucial steps for teachers to develop learning activities designed to establish strong connections with students' home cultures. Self-reflection and transformation of one's attitudes and beliefs is in no way a small and easy task, as Lisa Delpit (1988) poignantly describes:

> We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment and it is not easy. It is painful as well, because it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense who you are and being willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of anther's angry gaze. We must learn to be vulnerable enough to allow our world to turn upside down in order to allow the realities of others to edge themselves into our consciousness. (p. 297)

Let us not forget the fact that it must be even more excruciating and painful for children to feel their world turned upside down when educators fail to develop culturally relevant classrooms. In culturally insensitive environments children are less likely to feel welcomed and may experience less of themselves, as Myrna W. Ganter (1997) observes:

> Students know when teachers think less of them, and they retaliate by misbehaving and being disrespectful in the classroom. It is important to remember that all of us respond better when treated with dignity and respect. (p. 45)

Classroom teachers must then realize that they play a key role in creating a learning environment where respect is a rule rather than an exception for all children.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Rear View

Culturally responsive teaching practices reviewed for this inquiry seem to encompass and emphasize the following key features:

- Stresses respect for diversity to engage the motivation of all learners.
- Creates a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment.
- Integrates responsive teaching practices into all disciplines.
- Transforms curriculum to promote social justice and equity in society.

The development of an attitude of respect for diversity is seen as the beginning and

end of all learning experiences in a culturally responsive environment. A great deal of consensus exists among educators and researchers that a transformative curriculum promotes equity in classrooms as it questions the basic premises and assumptions of school knowledge. It is expected that a transformative curriculum will provide learning opportunities for children to enhance their critical thinking skills, which in turn will enable them to analyze their situation and transform it with the language of possibility.

The following conditions were identified from the literature reviewed for this study as critical elements of culturally responsive practices. Each of the critical conditions is followed by the source for the concept:

1. Culturally literate (Hudson, Bergin, & Chryst, 1993; Jackson, 1994).
2. Self-reflective analysis of one's attitudes and beliefs (Novick, 1996; Sandhu, 1994).
3. Caring, trusting, and inclusive classroom (Hemmings, 1994; Jackson,1994; Novick, 1996; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995
4. Respect for diversity (Hemmings, 1994; Novick, 1996; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995
5. Transformative curriculum to engender meaning (Hemmings, 1994; Gormley, McDermontt, Rothenberg, & Hammer, 1995; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995).

Five-Spoked Wheel of Culturally Responsive Teaching

The literature , reviewed for this inquiry, did not offer a conceptual linkage of personal culture, microculture, and macroculture in a way that indicates their relationships and dynamic influence on each other. Hence, a framework that vividly indicates the inter-relatedness and ever-changing nature of relationships among different levels of culture is proposed in this article to further the understanding of the complexity of culturally responsive teaching. Rather than being discrete parts, they are shown here as closely interrelated and continuously interacting conditions.

The framework integrates salient features of culturally responsive practices reviewed as a part of this inquiry. However, this framework recognizes the central and critical role of the teacher in creating a classroom that respects diversity and ensures the self-worth of all children as conditions essential for culturally responsive teaching. The framework shows the interrelationships between three levels of culture: personal, microculture, and macroculture. It considers the personal cultural identity as a pool of constructs, values, beliefs, and attitudes—many of which may be part of microcultural groups one may belong to. Microcultural groups are in turn influenced by the macroculture. The framework also makes the assumption that some of the constructs one associates with may have negative connotations with respect to different cultural groups.

This framework is predicated on the following assumptions:

u Being closest to learners, teachers play a key role in reducing and challenging cultural bias in classrooms.

ᴜ Teacher's on-going self-appraisal of their own attitudes, beliefs about different cultural groups is critical so that cultural bias is not allowed to   permeate curriculum.

ᴜ Inclusion of different cultural roles, perspectives, and literature into the curriculum leads to respect and appreciation for diversity.

ᴜ Positive cultural identify affirmation of children may lead them to become motivated to succeed in classroom.

ᴜ Respect for diversity, caring and inclusive classroom and self-esteem are interdependent.

ᴜ The process of becoming culturally responsive educator is a dynamic, cyclic, and continuous one.

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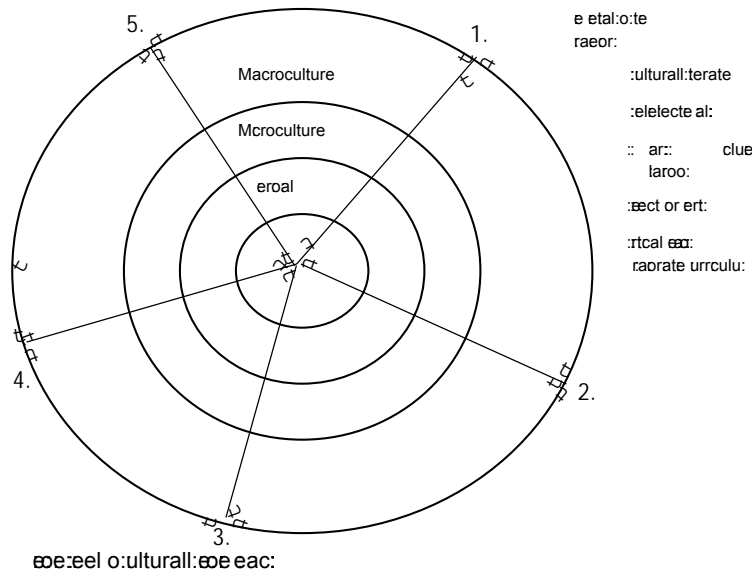
As Mary Louise Gomez (1993) suggests, no single multicultural activity, however profound it may be, is sufficient to prepare teachers to meet the challenges of working with culturally diverse students. Rather than relying on the magic of one diversity activity, the process of becoming a culturally responsive practitioner requires teachers to gain a multitude of experiences in culturally diverse school settings over a long period of time. Additionally, on-going reflective thinking about these experiences is a critical aspect of one's ability to develop cultural sensitivity which, hopefully, will result in curricular decisions to engage all learners in

meaningful and inclusive ways. It is important to reiterate that self-reflection and transformation of one's attitude and beliefs is in no way a small and easy task. Yet, it is a crucial one to ensure the kind of cultural metamorphosis that will enable teachers to create culturally responsive learning environments for all children.

Conclusions

This literature review brings to the forefront problems and issues that researchers and scholars consider crucial for developing culturally responsive teaching in the learning environment of our schools. Educators' attitudes play a vital role either in empowering or disabling learning for students from culturally diverse backgrounds. The effectiveness of culturally responsive classroom practices depends upon the way minority and majority relationships are perceived at societal, community, and school levels.

This inquiry highlights issues and suggestions that teacher education scholars consider to be critical for preparing teachers for diversity. This study should therefore help teacher education programs to develop campus and classrooms experiences for prospective teachers that will effectively prepare new teachers with attitudes, skills, and knowledge to enhance their ability to function effectively in culturally diverse schools. The critical elements of culturally responsive pedagogy as identified should help teacher educators to provide curricular experiences that will prepare prospective teacher to teach the children of "Others" in a responsive and sensitive way. Finally, this article proposes a holistic conceptual framework that provides a way to link culturally responsive teaching practices within the larger context of different levels of culture.

There is great need to identify effective ways to prepare teachers who will implement culturally responsive practices that will engage and motivate all children while allowing and encouraging those children to affirm their cultural identity in a positive manner. An equally important area is the need to identify effective ways to alter attitudes of teachers so that they are willing to reflect upon and change as appropriate their long-held views about teaching, culture, and learning. Researchers must undertake more short and long-term case studies with the view to developing powerful teaching practices. At the same time, it is important to study how race, culture, language, and gender intersect to influence teaching practices. The key to meeting the needs of all culturally different students may lie in developing even more effective culturally responsive teaching strategies that ensure curricular relevance and excellence for all learners.

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